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# ST 620 Emotions, Feelings, and Passion

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**ST 620**  
**THE EMOTIONS, FEELINGS, AND PASSION**  
**Larry Wood, Professor**  
**Asbury Theological Seminary**

The intent of this course is to explore the affective dimensions of belief. It combines the philosophical and psychological perspectives with the theological in an effort to understand and appreciate the role of the emotions, feelings, and passion in the development of one's personal theology.

**LEARNING GOALS:**

Upon the completion of this course, each student will understand:

- (1) the classical theories of emotion from Aristotle to Freud and postmodern psychology;
- (2) the role of emotion in Romanticism and its protest against Enlightenment rationalism;
- (3) the physiological basis of emotion as explained in recent brain research;
- (4) the Christian service of listening, dialog, and witness to sufferers of emotional affliction;
- (5) Kierkegaardian Existentialism and its contributions in relating reason and passion;
- (6) the risks of the "intellectualization" of faith;
- (7) the significance of emotion in biblical literature;
- (8) the role of affection in the theology of John Wesley
- (9) the role of emotions, feelings, and passion in the development of one's theology.

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology* (out of print and available in photocopy form)  
Paul Tillich, *Courage to Be*

**GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:**

- (1) A careful reading of all the assigned material in order to assure a meaningful classroom experience.
- (2) Write a ten-to-twelve page term paper on the idea of feeling as a means of knowing God. Please follow the proper rules of writing a term paper as specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style*.
- (3) Each student will make oral presentations in class based Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*.
- (4) Class attendance is required. Learning is more than acquiring factual information contained in texts, though that arduous task is absolutely essential. Learning is more than rote memory. Learning involves "thinking out loud" and engaging in conversation. Attending class provides a dialogical context for listening and participating in the meaning of ideas.

**CLASS FORMAT:**

The class will assume a seminar setting with some lectures and oral presentations by students.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### MODULE 1 – FEB 12

#### *General Introduction*

A lecture on the classical theories of emotion—the cognitive, the feeling, the behavioristic, and the psychoanalytic. Special attention will also be given to postmodern developments in psychology, noting some difference between the modern and postmodern points of view.

#### Recommended Reading:

- (1) William Lyon, *The Emotions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), pp. 1-52.
- (2) Robert M. Augros and George N. Stanciu, *The New Story of Science* (Chicago: Gateway Editions, 1984), pp. 83-140

#### *The Role of Feeling as a Method of Knowing*

A lecture on Rousseau (1712-1778), the “Father of Romanticism.” Rousseau introduced the capacity of feeling in philosophy as an alternate way to know God as a revolt against the Enlightenment thought of the French *philosophes*.

#### Recommended Reading:

Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “Confession of Faith of a Savoyard Vicar,” in Book IV of *Emile, or, On education*, introduction, translation, and notes by Allan Bloom. (Imprint New York : Basic Books, c1979). Call # LB512.E5 F6 1938

### MODULE 2 – FEB 19

#### *Feeling and Theological Method*

A lecture on Schleiermacher (1768-1834), the “Father of Modern Theology.” Schleiermacher formally introduced “feeling” as the primary method of doing theology in 1799.

#### Recommended Reading:

Schleiermacher, *On Religion*, Second Speech (New York: Harper, 1958), pp. 26-119. Call # BL48 .S33 1958  
Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Harper, 1968), pp. 391-398. Call # BT21.2 .T5 1968

A lecture on Hegel (1770-1831). As the high point of Romanticism in philosophy, Hegel highlighted the idea of religion as a “thoughtful feeling” of unity with God. His influence in the subsequent history of philosophy and theology has been enormous.

#### Recommended Reading:

Hegel, “The Kingdom of the Father,” in *The Christian Religion*, pp. 45-108, especially pages 71-72, 81-82, 94-95. Cat. # B2939.E5 H62  
Hegel, “The Means of Realization” in *Reason in History*, pp. 25-49. Call # D16.8 .H462.  
Hegel, “Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy,” *History of Philosophy*, pp. 123-150. Call # B2936.E5 K58 1985

A lecture on Wolfhart Pannenberg on the relation of faith and reason. Pannenberg notes the dangerous implications of divorcing religious belief from reason. Reason can assist faith to see that its historical basis is reliable and adequate, and faith can assist reason to become fully transparent to itself in its reflections.

Recommended Reading:

Wolffhart Pannenberg, "Insight and Faith," *Basic Questions in Theology*, trans. George H. Kehm (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971, Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 28-45. Call # BT80 .P3413

A lecture on Wesley (1703--1791), noting his Romantic tendencies with his view of feeling as an inner assurance of one's knowledge of God.

A lecture on Wesley's doctrine of the witness of the Spirit.

Recommended Reading:

Frederick C. Gill, *Methodism and Romanticism: a study of English romanticism and the evangelical revival* (London: Epworth Press, 1937), pp. 11-71. Call # BX8276 .G5

A lecture on John Fletcher (1729-1785), Wesley's "Vindicator and Designated Successor." We will examine his view of the "heavenly tempers" being shaped directly through the agency of the Holy Spirit within the life of a believer, liberating one emotionally/spiritually to love freely and spontaneously. Fletcher was an eloquent spokesman for the importance of the role of feeling in religious experience. Fletcher opposed extremism, but he showed that it was reasonable to believe that God performs miracles today and that feeling and emotion are vital aspects of human experience and are not to be discredited.

Recommended Reading:

Fletcher, "Experimental Religion," *The Works of the Reverend John Fletcher, late vicar of Madeley* (Imprint, Salem, Ohio : Schmul, 1974), 5:pp. Call # BX8217 .F628 1974

MODULE 3 – FEB 26

*The Social and Relational Meaning of the Trinity*

A lecture on The Trinity and the Nature of Love

One of the distinctive features of Wesley's theology was his emphasis on the relational/sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit. We will examine in this lecture the doctrine of the trinity, noting in particular the difference between the early Greek Fathers and the Latin Fathers. Of particular significance is the emphasis upon the nature of love as the essence of God.

A lecture on Jürgen Moltmann who focuses on the social/relational/emotional characteristics of God's nature. Through his proposal of a Trinitarian pneumatology, he seeks to show how love and human freedom (both personal and social) can become the basis of a meaningful community.

Recommended Reading:

Moltmann, "The Passion of God," in the *Trinity and the Kingdom*, pp. 21-60. "A Companion Volume to Understanding Moltmann," (forthcoming) Asbury Theological Journal (Spring, 2000). Call # BT111.2 .M613 1981

Module 4 – March 5

*Left Brain, Right Brain Research and the Neurophysiological Basis of Feeling*

A lecture on recent brain research that indicates how the two hemispheres of the brain process emotion, noting in particular how the right hemisphere processes emotional information.

Recommended Reading:

L. Wood, "Recent Brain Research and the Mind-Body Dilemma," *The Best in Theology*, ed. James I. Packer and Paul Fromer (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc, 1987), 2:203-141.

Call # BR50 .B444 1987

MODULE 5 – MARCH 12

*Relationality and the Meaning of Persons*

A lecture on Paul Tillich's Concept of Theological Method

A lecture on Paul Tillich's Concept of the Meaning of persons who must live with feelings of ambiguity and anxiety. He believes feelings of meaninglessness typify our contemporary world and thus faith must be redefined as courage (a neo-Stoicism) as a result of the modern experience of personal estrangement and a loss of belief in the traditional view of God

Required Reading:

Tillich, *Courage to Be* (New Haven, CT : Yale University Press, c1952).

Call # BJ1533.C8 T5

Recommended Reading:

Tillich, *Systematic Theology* (University of Chicago Press, ), Volume One.

A brief lecture on Philip Rieff, *The Triumph of the Therapeutic, Uses of Faith after Freud* (Call # BD450 .R48). Rieff believes that a psychologizing of the meaning of persons has made Christian theology unintelligible and unacceptable to our therapeutically-minded culture. As a sociologist, he says the future generations will increasingly turn to the therapists for self-discovery instead of to Christian ministers and priests for salvation through Jesus Christ.

MODULE 6 – MARCH 19

*A Synthesis of Psychotherapy, Theology, and Philosophy.*

Frank Lake offers a brilliant synthesis of psychotherapy, theology, and philosophy.

*Clinical Theology* (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1966) (Call # BV4012 .L282 1987) is one of the few best books ever written. His case-study approach to pastoral theology demonstrates how emotionally scarring events in one's life affect one capacity to relate to others and to God. This is a "must read" book for appreciating the significance of the affective dimensions of religious belief and practice.

Required Reading :

"Introduction," *Clinical Theology*, p. xv-xxx.

"The Christian Service of Listening, Dialogue, Witness and Counselling in Relation to Troubled Persons, Sufferers from the Psychoneuroses, and the Disorders of Personality," *Clinical Theology*, pp. 1-100.

MODULE 7 – MARCH 26

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, "The Understanding and Care of Schizoid Personalities, *Clinical Theology* pp. 553 - 602

MODULE 8 – APRIL 9

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 602-660

MODULE 9 – APRIL 16

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 660-704

MODULE 10 – APRIL 23

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 704-752.

MODULE 11 – APRIL 30

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 752-796.

MODULE 12 – MAY 7

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 796-861

MODULE 13 – MAY 14

*Intellectual Defense against Emotional, Spiritual Injury and Divine Healing*

Required Reading:

Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, pp. 861-923

Recommended Reading:

David E. Seamands, *Healing for Damaged Emotions*, (Wheaton, Ill. : Victor Books, c1981). Call # BS680.E4 S43(Call # BV4012 .L282 1987 for sound recordings).